

New Directions and Challenges in Federal Stewardship of Visual Resources

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Abstract

The need to protect and preserve natural, cultural, and scenic resources is an escalating imperative for those tasked with managing public lands and waters. The recent increase in onshore and offshore energy development activities compromises critical visitor experiences when it encroaches on landscapes and seascapes cherished for their naturalness, scenic beauty, and cultural significance. National priorities for energy development, which include conventional and renewable energy resources, have placed unusually high pressure on landscapes and offshore areas that are ideal for solar, wind, geothermal, oil and gas, and other energy-related development. The demand for new electric transmission and pipeline corridors to carry this energy to market may also potentially alter the landscape's visual character. The role of public land and offshore management agencies involves accommodating the demand for resource development while protecting the visual value and the integrity of its natural character.

The Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management are tasked with managing public lands and seascapes, but the agencies also authorize onshore/offshore energy development. Representatives from the agencies will update the audience on current directions taken to meet the escalating challenges in visual resource stewardship. These agencies share many of the same challenges; however, their approaches to resolve these common issues may vary. For this presentation, each agency prepared a brief written synopsis on agency history with managing visual resources, new directions in visual resource stewardship policy, and the challenges they face.